

morning tears newsletter

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Editorial

The idea of justice

Charles Dickens wrote in *Great Expectations*: “In the little world in which children have their existence, there is nothing so finely perceived and finely felt as injustice.” Anybody who has ever had cared for children knows Dickens was absolutely right. Children are very sensitive if adults give – from their point of view – unequal treatment to different kids. But the strong perception of manifest injustice applies to adults as well. The modern philosopher Amartya Sen observes that “what moves us, reasonable enough, is not the realization that the world falls short of being completely just – which few of us expect – but that there are clearly remediable injustices around us which we want to eliminate.”

One of these injustices in which we are very effective in eliminating is that there are people in society who committed acts that aren't in life with society's values.

We increasingly give more people longer prison sentences. Crimes are instinctively perceived with disgust and consequently dealt with in the same spirit.

But an equally strong instinctive reaction pops up when people come to know that the bonds between children and parents are cut. Car accidents in which parents die or other tragedies after which children have to move on without their mother and/or father provoke strong empathic reactions. But these reactions are often absent when parental imprisonment is the cause of the break of the bond. Our disgust for criminal violations makes us blind to the injustice this brings for imprisoned parents' children.

We consider ourselves civilized. Now, if we really want to act civilized, we ought to protect the most vulnerable in our society – children – from the unintended secondary effects of our elimination of injustices, namely criminal incarceration. There are many actions we can take to shield our children: facilitating child-friendly prison visits, protecting kids from poverty, working with schools to prevent bias against these children, etc. But why is so little of this happening? It's because society does not see the injustice done to the children. It's the disgust over their parents' criminality, and our sentiments and – above all – children don't speak out.



Editorial (cont'd)

We need to be aware, and make the public aware, of the massive injustice against children of convicts. The children themselves will not do this, despite that – as Charles Dickens articulates – they surely feel and suffer the pain of the grave injustice that has come over them. The children suffer their shame and loss in silence. They're victims who hide because they know society will judge them for coming from a “bad family”.

Morning Tears knows this injustice is remediable. We need your help to eliminate it. Let's be civilized.

Koen Sevenants
 Founder - Director of Morning Tears
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News

Yoga and the children

March 2014. Finally. Our trip to China can begin. For years now, my brother has been asking me to come and visit the children at Morning Tears at Zhengzhou and Xi'an. And now that I'm a certified children's yoga teacher, my brother and I see possibilities to introduce yoga.

An introduction

The word yoga means “to join together,”. The practice brings the body and mind together into one harmonious experience.

The whole system is built on three main structures: exercise, breathing and meditation.

Yoga is about respecting your limits, not crossing them, and feeling how your body can work with you, not against you.

Our goal was to give an introduction class to different ages – younger than 8 years, 8-15, and staff.

Yoga for children younger than 8



Children strike giraffe poses

It's important to understand that children's yoga is completely different from adult yoga. In children's yoga, the focus is entirely on body awareness. It's not about correcting poses, if there are any poses. And it should be fun! Take the children for a trip into the forest and meet different animals and depict poses based on them, such as those of monkeys, snakes and giraffes. Let them play and laugh.

A short relaxation period while telling a fairy tale or a story and some breathing is a good ending of a yoga class.

The class in Zhengzhou was great! The children really liked my finger puppets of a monkey and gi-



raffe, and we went for a treasure-hunting journey. And although yoga was new, these children are still have very flexible muscles. Their imaginations do the rest. I'm very grateful I could be a part of it.

Yoga for children 8-15 years

This age is not easy. Being "cool" is important. So it's good to put some challenges in this yoga class. But the emphasis is still on body awareness and not so much on doing the poses correctly.

In this class I worked mainly on stretching and breathing and some challenging poses (if the child was up for it).

Working with this age is very different than working with younger ones. In my opinion, it is important that you can tap into their world through music, books, people they look up to and the like.

In this case, I knew that some children suffered serious traumas, so I was careful with touch games.

But again, it was a fun class with much laughter and children.



Yoga class ends with relaxation and amazing children

Yoga for staff

This was a 1 and ½ hour class. I wanted to give some extra explanations about yoga and answer their questions.

One of the questions was: Is yoga therapy or just playtime? I think this a very legitimate question. In my opinion, all starts with your intention. If you have the desire to work on breathing and body awareness and do that in a playful manner, then yoga is your thing.

But yoga can also be a supportive therapy. Yoga can help with the concentration problems a staff member explained many of the children experience.

It is through breathing and balancing poses that concentration can be accomplished. Because they have to focus to perform the pose and focus equal concentration. Yoga makes you feel good about your body and that creates a positive self image, which is indispensable for everyone. So, I strongly believe in the power of yoga. I've seen it not only in my own experience but also with these children. In collaboration with psychological therapy and counseling, yoga deserves its place in the realm of healing trauma.

Yoga, Morning Tears and the future

It is our intention to make a yoga-for-beginners tutorial for staff.

In our view it is important that teachers know and understand the basic principles of yoga: respect, kindness and openness. Without that, yoga is not yoga.

After that, the plan is to look for a good tutorial in the market that provides a clear explanation of the poses and breathing. The big hurdle is the translation into Chinese.

For me, the trip to China and the visit to Morning Tears was inspiring on so many levels. I wish to thank my brother Koen, and the staff and translators who helped me enormously and, most of all, the children with the twinkles in their eyes and the smiles on their faces.

Like we say in yoga ... Namasté.



Prison project starts in Germany

“Bindungsräume” – Creating child-friendly visitation rooms for Cologne Prison

The BAG-S (Federal Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) initiated a joint project to improve the visiting facilities in Cologne Prison according to a child-friendly approach as an example of good practices. Morning Tears was invited as a partner with expertise in dealing with children of convicts. Other partners include the Catholic Social Support Centers for men and women, who have expertise from many years of work inside Cologne Prison.

Professors at Alanus Hochschule from the Bachelor of Arts departments in Childhood Education and Art-Education-Therapy kicked off this project with an intensive weekend seminar. The seminar focused on interior design's relationship with human interaction. It addresses such questions as: How much can a room do for visitors? Can visitor rooms create a more calming and less traumatic atmosphere? Can they create positive experiences for both parents and children? Will this lead to more visits by convicts' children? And will this stabilize relationships, which will help the whole family upon the prisoners' release?

The three-day-seminar covered psychological and educational fundamentals of “development of the individual self” (with a focus on attachment theories) and practical classes to reflect on face-to-face-encounters, attachment, bonding and communication as well as an introduction to the principles of participation in regards to interior design. Furthermore, the students learn how to realize this project including planning, finances and implementation under the special conditions of working inside a highly sensitive and complex environment, such as a prison.

The students were extremely moved and interested in all topics about parental incarceration's effects on the children. A small group of students from Alanus Hochschule's comprehensive study courses will – following the seminar – develop a concept for the design of child-friendly visitors rooms. This concept will be implemented on the premises of the prison once approved by the prison director later this year.

The cooperation between internal and external partners working for Cologne Prison, with the possible inclusion of affected children and parents, will show a new feasible path toward a prison environment and routine that acknowledges the rights and needs of children and supports their well-being during and after visits.

Morning Tears Germany is very proud to be a partner in this project, and we will keep you informed about the progress in coming newsletters. For more information also visit our website or Facebook page (and “Like” Morning Tears Deutschland).

2nd Social Worker Training in Cambodia: Setting up a Unique System for Child Development Assessment for Children Living in Prison

The social worker training in Phnom Penh was a great success and a milestone for our project in Cambodia!

And this is why:

During this training, we have set up a system to assess, monitor and support the development of children who live in prisons, besides the assistance in providing survival needs. This system will make a huge difference for many children, and it is unique in the world.



Learning Child Development Assessment (CDA) in theory and practice was the ultimate goal of this training and it will carry us well into the future in Cambodia.

Assessing children in their development from the earliest years onwards will help us all understand where they develop well and where they lag. The regular screening and follow up of the therapies our social workers can bring to the children in prison will ensure they can develop as normal as possible, even under prisons' harsh living conditions. We learned how to inform the mothers about support they can give to their children while they care for them in the prisons and how they can monitor and take action if their children need help. Thank you to the caregivers and director at Saint Guardian Angels Kindergarten for letting us visit! We will be happy to support them with further visits when needed.

Learning about Er Tong Tuina told us how much can be done and changed for the children by using this traditional Chinese therapeutic massage. The children can be relieved of illnesses like fever, diarrhoea and the symptoms of colds.

And they appreciate the undivided attention of a quiet massage in a safe environment.

We could visit a family in Phnom Penh in their squatter home and, with the caring grandparents present, meet with a whole neighbourhood of street children. The grandchildren volunteered to try the *tuina* massage, and their friends watched intently and immediately tried to imitate the movements.

For the boys and girls, and for us, it was a half day of peace and comfort and a moment for them to forget their poor environments.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank **our donor Lauritzen Foundation in Denmark** for again providing the necessary funding for this training. We are especially grateful that we can put the newly acquired knowledge directly into use in the prisons and the work with the children.

Applying CDA is of great importance to Morning Tears to build a structured team of skilled social workers inside Cambodia and to build up a reliable filing system, for all children that live in Cambodia's prisons. Such a systematic approach is to date not available in Cambodia and greatly needed for the future.

To build up and support our team, we would greatly welcome donations – if you are interested to learn more about the needs please write martina.cannetta@morningtears.org in Cambodia.

Relevant Actualities

- **No books and self-made birthday cards for fathers in UK prison**

Source: www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2014/03/23/comment-why-has-grayling-banned-prisoners-being-sent-books

- **Work done for children of convicts in Canada**

Source: www.ctvnews.ca/w5/unique-program-connects-children-with-fathers-in-prison-1.1760806



News from Coming Home Project - Henan

What happened in last 2 months (February and March)

- Feb.17-24th: Kou Wei gave a training about how to help traumatized children and relevant knowledge to staff. It took seven days. It's very useful to better understand the children in Ai Tong Yuan and solve the problems they face.
- Feb.28th: Eight children of Ai Tong Yuan were invited to protection center and joined other children for an activity about summer health.
- Mar.6th: Ai Tong Yuan's old gate was replaced by a new one. It's stronger and safer.
- Mar.8th: Teachers from Zhengzhou University visited Ai Tong Yuan. They brought some footballs, basketballs and other sport supplies. They said they had a meaningful Women's Day.
- Mar.12th: Journalists from Zhengzhou TV interviewed Koen in Ai Tong Yuan. The video will be broadcast on the charity channel of Zhengzhou TV. It will let more people know about Morning Tears and its work in Zhengzhou.
- Mar.15th, a group of about 20 people from Beijing Hilton hotel visited Ai Tong Yuan. They organized a BBQ for children and planted flowers with the kids. Children would like to use their hands to make Ai Tong



Yuan and their lives more colourful.

- Mar.18th: Koen's sister Els and her husband visited Ai Tong Yuan, accompanied by Koen Sevenants, executive director of Morning Tears. They gave a yoga training for children and caregivers in the protection center and Ai Tong Yuan.

- Mar.22-23th: Four volunteers from Shanghai visited Ai Tong Yuan. They brought gifts for the

children and played with them. Children are happy they could help to set up a new house for these babies.



Finances (./.)

Financial statement Morning Tears China 2013

Currency: CNY

Revenue & support

Private donations	44,631.10
Corporate	155,998.10
International schools, clubs and organizations	92,096.60
Event & sales	619,087.88
Institutional	373,558.50
Home Provider	312,874.10
Community Sponsorship	17,054.28
Foundations	500,000.00
Other	595.06
Total	2,115,895.62

Operating expenditure

Awareness raising	31,689.82
Coming Home Program	1,148,327.30
Strengthening Institutions	983,320.58
Re-unification projects	287,582.66
San Yuan	14,370.00
Xi'an Children Village	6,119.00
Dream Trip	162,200.10
Cambodia	69,505.41
Research & academic cooperation	12,768.04
Other training & capacity building expense	50,683.63
Fundraising	38,940.15
General & management	339,993.08
Total	3,145,499.77

Gain and Loss	28,229.90
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Total net assets (1st Jan 2013)	2,425,938.00
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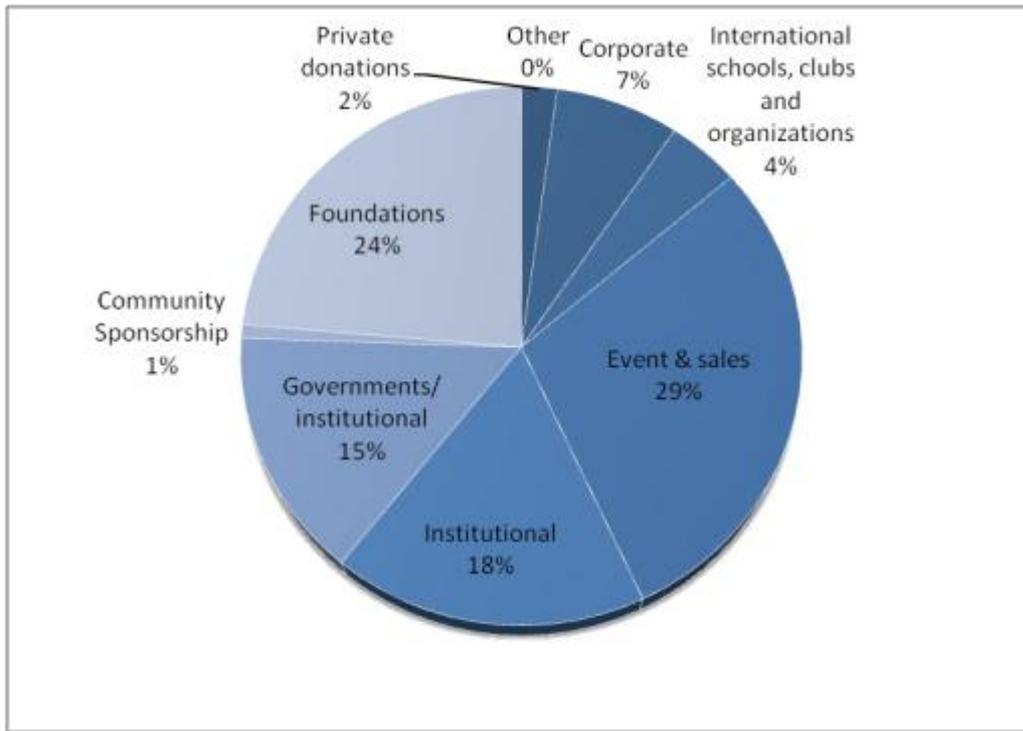
Total net assets (31st Dec 2013)	1,341,617.13
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Change in total net assets excl EU	-1,057,834.05
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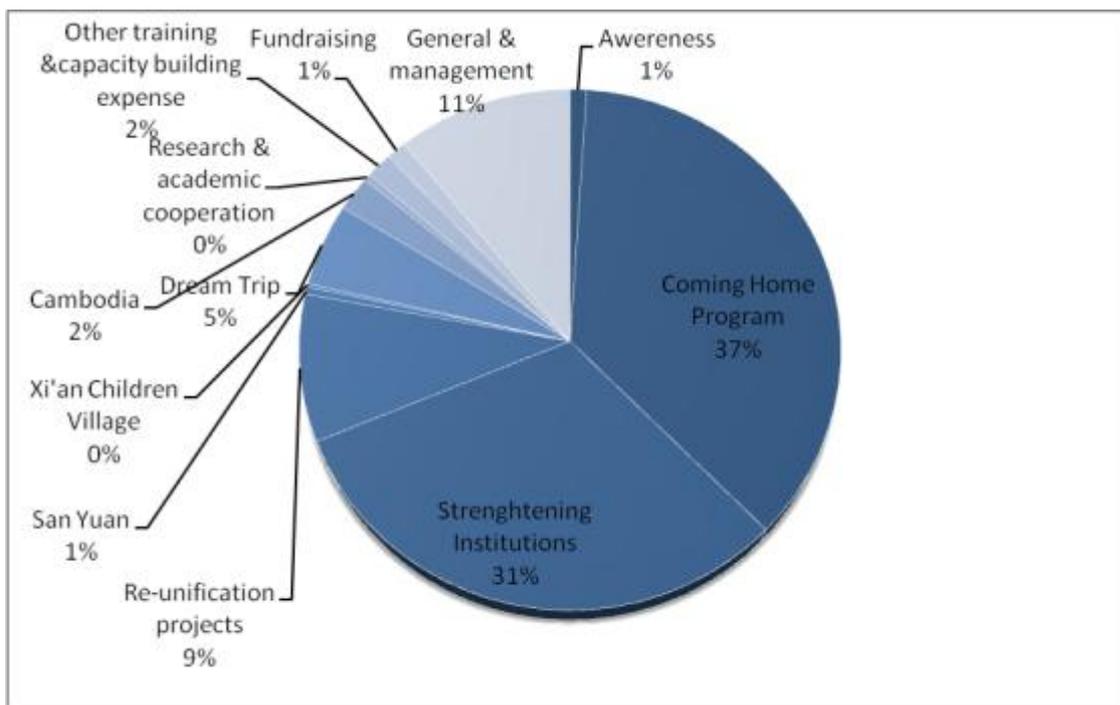


Finances (../..)

Income by donor type



Operating expenditure





Morning Tears Belgium

BNP Paribas Fortis
 Account No: 001-4495454-65
 IBAN: BE 18001449545465
 BIC/SWIFT: GEBABEBB

Morning Tears Netherlands

ABN Amro
 Account No: 45.75.13.764
 Stichting Morning Tears Nederland
 IBAN: NL81ABNA0457513764
 BIC/SWIFT: ABNANL2A

Morning Tears Spain

La Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions
 Account No: 2100.0233.99.0200332319
 IBAN: ES28 21000233990200332319
 BIC/SWIFT: CAIXAESBXXX

Morning Tears Denmark

Danske Bank
 Account No: 10490189 Reg. Nr. 1551
 IBAN: DK14 3000 0010 4901 89
 BIC/SWIFT: DABADKKK

Morning Tears in China

Bank of China, Beijing Xi Cui Lu Sub-Branch
 [中国银行北京西翠路支行]
 Account No: 3259-5481-6793
 Beneficiary: Guo Zhi Hong (郭志弘)
 BIC/SWIFT: BKCHCNBJ110

Morning Tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.

Morning Tears rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

Morning Tears has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 Morning Tears became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, Morning Tears has offices in Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, the USA, Hong Kong and China.

Morning Tears is run mainly by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of Morning Tears are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.